

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1793

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 6266

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (SHAHIN, MIKE THOMAS)

SUBJECT: W/W MEDEVAC: MIKE THOMAS SHAHIN.

REF: A. STATE 181656 B. BRUSSELS 6235

1. SUBJECT ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL IN LEBANON JULY 28, 1974, FOR FRACTURE OF NECK OF RIGHT FEMUR. FOR VARIETY OF REASONS: 1) BELIEF THAT 90 YEAR OLD SHAHIN WOULD STAND BETTER CHANCE RECOVERY AT HOME, 2) FACT THAT HIS MEDICAL AND SURGICAL EXPENSES COVERED BY MEDICARE IN US BUT NOT ABROAD, AND 3) DAUGHTER'S LACK OF FAITH IN LEBANESE MEDICINE, SURGERY WAS NOT PERFORMED IN LEBANON. SHAHIN DEPARTED BEIRUT AUGUST 10 FOR LOS ANGELES BY SABENA VIA ATHENS, BRUSSELS, AND NEW YORK. BETWEEN BEIRUT AND ATHENS HE COMPLAINED OF PAIN AND WAS EXAMINED BY A PHYSICIAN IN ATHENS. PERMITTED TO CONTINUE THE FLIGHT HE HAD EVEN MORE DIFFICULTY BETWEEN ATHENS AND BRUSSELS. ON ARRIVAL HERE THE CARRIER REFUSED TO TRANSPORT HIM FURTHER AND SENT HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.

2. EXAMINATION HERE REVEALED TRACES OF PREVIOUS HEART DAMAGE AND SABENA REQUESTED ASSURANCES FROM THE HOSPITAL THAT THESE DID NOT REFLECT A RECENT ATTACK. SINCE HE HAS BEEN UNDER OBSERVATION HERE SUCH A SHORT TIME, THE HOSPITAL REFUSES TO PROVIDE SUCH ASSURANCES, BUT WILL BE WILLING TO DO SO IF HE REMAINS HERE UNDER OBSERVATION FOR TOTAL PERIOD OF FOUR WEEKS.

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3. THUS, SABENA REFUSES ACCEPT PASSENGER FOR AT LEAST THREE MORE WEEKS. THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN, DR. ROSILLON, FAVORS RETURNING SHIHIN IMMEDIATELY TO THE US FOR TREATMENT OF FRACTURE BECAUSE HE BELIEVES SUBJECT STANDS BEST CHANCE SURVIVAL THERE. DOCTOR INSISTS ANY FURTHER DEFERRAL OF REQUIRED SURGERY WILL INSURE THAT PATIENT NOT SURVIVE OPERATION. TO AVOID POSSIBLE FATAL DELAY, THEREFORE, DOCTOR RECOMMENDS AIR FORCE MEDEVAC.

4. EMBASSY HAS NOT APPROACHED OTHER COMMERCIAL CARRIERS BECAUSE: 1) AFTER SABENA'S EXPERIENCE TRANSPORTING SUBJECT BETWEEN BEIRUT AND BRUSSELS, NO OTHER CARRIER LIKELY TO REQUIRE LESS THAN SABENA IN THE WAY OF ASSURANCES ON THE STATE OF HIS HEALTH, AND 2) ANY OTHER CARRIER WOULD CERTAINLY REFER THE QUESTION BACK TO THE HOME OFFICE (NEW YORK FOR PANAM AND KANSAS CITY FOR TWA) ENTAILING, AS WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE, FURTHER DELAY.

5. DR. ROSILLON STATES THAT SHAHIN CAN TRAVEL IN SINGLE RECLINING SEAT. TOTAL OF TWO SEATS NEEDED IF DAUGHTER ACCOMPANIES HIM IN AIR FORCE PLANE.

6. CORRECTION: FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA FOUR REF. B. SHOULD READ...FOR TREATMENT OF FRACTURE OF NECK OF RIGHT FEMUR INSTEAD OF QUOTE NECK FRACTURE END QUOTE. RENNER

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